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Latest downed objects could well be 'benign,' U.S. says

By TARA COPP, ERIC TUCKER and COLLEEN LONG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The three still-unidentified aerial objects shot down by the U.S. in the past week likely had merely a "benign purpose," the White House acknowledged Tuesday, drawing a distinction between them and the massive Chinese balloon that earlier traversed the U.S. with a suspected goal of surveillance.

"The intelligence community is considering as a leading explanation that these could just be balloons tied to some commercial or benign purpose," said White House national security spokesman John Kirby.

Officials also disclosed that a missile fired at one of the three objects, over Lake Huron on Sunday, missed its intended target and landed in the water before a second one successfully hit.

The new details came as the Biden's administration's actions over the past two weeks faced fresh scrutiny in Congress.

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Gen. Glen VanHerck, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, walks to a secure area as lawmakers and intelligence advisers arrive for a closed briefing on the unknown aerial objects the U.S. military shot down this weekend at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

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Latest downed objects could well be 'benign,' U.S. says

Continued from Front

First, U.S. fighter jets didn't shoot down what officials described as a Chinese spy balloon until after it had crossed much of the United States, citing safety concerns. Then the military deployed F-22 fighters with heat-seeking missiles to quickly shoot down what likely were harmless objects.

Taken together, the actions raised political as well as security questions, about whether the Biden administration overreacted after facing Republican criticism for reacting too slowly to the big balloon.

Even as more information about the three objects emerges, questions remain about what they were, who sent them and how the U.S. might respond to unidentified airborne objects in the future. Still unaddressed are questions about the original balloon, including what spying capabilities it had and whether it was transmitting signals as it flew over sensitive military sites in the United States.

Little is known about the three objects shot down over three successive days, from Friday to Sunday, in part because it's been challenging to recover debris from remote locations in the Canadian Yukon, off northern Alaska and near the Upper Peninsula



National Security Council spokesman John Kirby speaks during a press briefing at the White House, Monday, Feb. 13, 2023, in Washington.

of Michigan on Lake Huron. So far, officials have no indication they were part of a bigger surveillance operation along with the balloon that was shot down off the South Carolina coast on Feb. 4.

"We don't see anything that points right now to being part of the PRC spy balloon program," Kirby told reporters, referring to the People's Republic of China. It's also not likely the objects were "intelligence collection against the United States of any kind — that's the indication now." No country or private company has come forward to claim any of the objects,

Kirby said. They do not appear to have been operated by the U.S. government. Kirby had hinted Monday that the three objects were different in substantive ways from the balloon, including in their size. And his comments Tuesday marked a clear effort by the White House to draw a line between the balloon, which officials believe was part of a Chinese military program that has operated over five continents, and objects that the administration thinks could simply be part of some research or commercial effort.

In Washington, Pentagon officials met with senators

for a classified briefing on the shootdowns. Lawmakers conveyed concerns from their constituents about a need to keep them informed and came away assured the objects were not extraterrestrial in nature but wanting many more details.

Still, Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said the successful recent interceptions were likely to have a "calming influence" and make future shootdowns less likely.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., told reporters after the briefing that he didn't think the objects posed a threat. "They're trying to figure out — you know there's

a bunch of junk up there. So you got to figure out what's the threat, what's not. You see something, you shouldn't always have to shoot it down," Graham said. Biden has ordered National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan to form an interagency team to study the detection, analysis and "disposition of unidentified aerial objects" that could pose either safety or security risks. The recent objects have also drawn the attention of world leaders including in Canada, where one was shot down on Saturday, and in the United Kingdom, where the prime minister has ordered a security review.

Japan's Defense Ministry said Tuesday that at least three flying objects spotted in Japanese airspace since 2019 are strongly believed to have been Chinese spy balloons.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials confirmed that a first missile aimed at the object over Lake Huron landed instead in the water, but that a second one hit the target.

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the military went to "great lengths" to make sure none of the strikes put civilians at risk, including identifying what the debris field size was likely to be and the maximum effective range of the missiles used. □



Valentine's Day decorations adorn the White House lawn, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The handprints of military chil-

dren pressed onto paper hearts are decorating a corner inside the White House and the lawn as first

Open hearts, helping hands: Jill Biden's valentine to U.S.

lady Jill Biden celebrates Valentine's Day.

Three large hearts, one with the message, "Reach Out with Open Hearts and Helping Hands this Valentine's Day," and two others featuring handprints are on display on the north lawn in view of television cameras where White House correspondents stand for their live reports.

Cut-outs of dog Commander and cat Willow are also part of the display.

The theme continues inside

the executive mansion as a corner of the East Wing entrance is decorated with three more large hearts, all printed with "Love," and replicas of the dog and cat. Hearts bearing the children's handprints have been strung together and hung in a window for visitors taking public tours to see.

The first lady and the children worked on the "heart" projects when she visited the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Drum, New York, home of the 10th Mountain Division,

on Jan. 30. The 3- to 5-year-old children are enrolled at Fort Drum South Riva Ridge Child Development Center.

The visit was part of her Joining Forces initiative to support military and veteran families and their caregivers.

Valentine's Day is one of the first lady's favorite holidays. She also displayed Valentine's Day messages at the White House in 2021 and 2022. □

Pence to fight special counsel subpoena on 2020 election

By JILL COLVIN and
ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Vice President Mike Pence is planning to fight a subpoena by the special counsel overseeing investigations into efforts by former President Donald Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election, according to people familiar with his thinking.

Pence and his attorneys are planning to cite constitutional grounds as they prepare to resist special counsel Jack Smith's efforts to compel his testimony before a grand jury. They argue that because Pence was serving in his role as president of the Senate on Jan. 6, 2021 as he presided over a joint session of Congress to certify the election results, he is protected from being forced to address his actions under the Constitution's "speech-or-debate" clause that shields members of Congress.

"I think he views it as essential protection of his Constitutional role," said Marc Short, a close adviser to Pence who served as his White House chief of staff. Short compared Pence's position to the one he took on Jan. 6 when he refused to go along with Trump's unconstitutional scheme to try to overturn the results of the 2020 election, as well as Pence's rejection of using the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office in the aftermath.

"The vice president of the United States is the president of the Senate and the fact is the functions of Jan. 6 were specific to that role," he said of Pence, who has been laying the groundwork for a likely presidential campaign that would put him in direct competition against his former boss.

Whether Pence's arguments will succeed in limiting or altogether avoiding grand jury testimony is unclear, but the Justice Department is expected to oppose those efforts and to make the case that the former vice president's cooperation is essential for a

probe focused on Trump's actions.

The decision to try to fight the subpoena, which was first reported by Politico, marks a change in posture from Pence, who has cooperated with the Justice Department as it investigates how documents with classified markings ended up at his Indiana home after the end of the Trump administration. He permitted the FBI to search the property last week.

Even if his objection is ultimately rebuffed from the courts, an antagonistic posture could allow Pence to argue that he tried to fight the Justice Department — a potentially useful position in a GOP primary, as many in the Republican base have grown distrustful of federal law enforcement, in part due to Trump's drumbeat of criticism. And it could delay the special counsel probe, which Smith is working to rapidly advance.

Pence has spoken extensively about Trump's pressure campaign urging him to reject President Joe Biden's victory in the days leading up to Jan. 6, including in his book, "So Help Me God." Pence, as vice president, had a ceremonial role overseeing the counting of the Electoral College vote, but did not have the power to impact the results.

Pence's decision to resist the subpoena also came after extensive back-and-forth between his lawyers and the special counsel's office, according to a person familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations.

The Justice Department declined to comment Tuesday on Pence's plans.

Pence is expected to address the issue in more detail during a visit to Iowa Wednesday as he inches closer to a likely presidential run.

Richard Levy, a constitutional law professor at the University of Kansas, said it is true that the vice president is in a unique position

as the technical presiding officer of the Senate, making the officeholder in some respects a member of the chamber.

But he said that not everything a member does is protected by the speech-or-debate clause and it is debatable whether the vice president's role in certifying the election, which involves a mix of constitutional and senatorial functions, would be protected. In any event, Pence's argument would likely serve to limit the scope of his testimony rather than to block it altogether, he said.

"I don't think the speech or debate clause would be a basis for quashing the subpoena altogether. It would be a basis for objecting to particular questions," he



Former Vice President Mike Pence speaks during an interview with The Associated Press, Nov. 16, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

said.

Trump supporters, driven by the lie that the election was stolen, brutally pushed past the police and smashed through the windows and doors while

Pence was presiding over the certification of Biden's victory. The vice president was steered to safety with his staff and family as some in the mob chanted, "Hang Mike Pence!"

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Police seek motive of gunman who killed 3 at Michigan State

By **JOEY CAPPELLETTI and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER**
Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP)

— The 43-year-old gunman who killed three students and wounded five others at Michigan State University had no apparent connection to the campus, police said Tuesday as they searched for a motive for shootings that terrified the community for hours.

Investigators were sorting out why Anthony McRae fired inside an academic building and the student union just before 8:30 p.m. Monday. An hourslong lockdown at the campus in East Lansing ended when he killed himself miles away while being confronted by police.

The shooting happened the day before the fifth anniversary of the Parkland, Florida, school shooting that killed 17 and is the latest in what has become a deadly new year in the U.S. "We have to do something to stop the gun violence that's ripping apart our communities," President Joe Biden said in a speech Tuesday, mentioning Michigan State.

Meanwhile, a school district in Ewing Township, New Jersey, closed for the day after investigators said that McRae, who lived in the area years ago, had a note in his pocket indicating a threat to schools there. But



This combination of images from surveillance video provided by Michigan State University Police and Public Safety show a suspect whom authorities are looking for in connection with multiple shootings at the university late Monday, Feb. 13, 2023, in East Lansing, Mich.

Associated Press

it was determined there was no credible threat, local police said later in a statement shared by the superintendent.

The dead and injured in the gunfire at Berkey Hall and the MSU Union, a popular place to eat and study, were all Michigan State students. Five remained in critical condition at Sparrow Hospital, said Dr. Denny Martin, who fought back tears during a news conference Tuesday.

"We have absolutely no idea what the motive was," said Chris Rozman, deputy chief of campus police, adding that McRae, 43, of Lansing, was not a student or Michigan State employee.

"This is still fluid," Rozman

said. "There are still crime scenes that are being processed, and we still are in the process of putting together the pieces to try to understand what happened."

The dead were all from the Detroit area. Two graduated from separate high schools in the Grosse Pointe district: Brian Fraser, president of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, and Arielle Anderson. Alexandria Verner, a graduate of Clawson High School in another Detroit suburb, also died.

"If you knew her, you loved her and we will forever remember the lasting impact she has had on all of us," Clawson Superintendent Billy Shellenbarger said in an email to families.

The shootings took place in an area of older, stately buildings on the northern edge of the Michigan State campus, one of the nation's largest at 5,200 acres. Just across busy Grand River Avenue lies East Lansing's downtown, teeming with restaurants, bars and shops.

"Our Spartan community is reeling today," Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Michigan State graduate, said at the morning briefing.

Biden pledged his support during a phone call, she said.

"We mourn the loss of beautiful souls today and pray for those who are continuing to fight for their lives. ... Another place that is supposed to be about community and togetherness is shattered by bullets and bloodshed," Whitmer said.

Michigan State has about 50,000 students, including 19,000 who live on campus. As hundreds of officers scoured the campus, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) northwest of Detroit, students hid where they could Monday night.

At 11 p.m., police were still searching for McRae when he turned up on school security cameras, and his image was quickly released to news media. An "alert citizen" saw the picture, recognized him in the Lansing area and contacted

police within minutes, Rozman said.

"That was exactly what we were trying to achieve by releasing that picture. We had no idea where he was at that point," the deputy chief said.

Officers confronted McRae about 5 miles (8 kilometers) from campus in an industrial area, where he killed himself, Rozman said.

In 2019, McRae was accused of illegally possessing a concealed weapon, according to the state Corrections Department, but pleaded guilty to having a loaded gun in a vehicle, a misdemeanor. He completed 18 months of probation. A large police presence was in his Lansing neighborhood overnight. Suzanne Shook said she has lived a block away from McRae for about a year.

"We never spoke to him," Shook said. "When he would be walking or riding his bike, he was always straightforward and wouldn't look at anybody." Students, meanwhile, recalled the previous night's terror. Dominik Molotky said he was learning about Cuban history around 8:15 p.m. when he and the other students heard a gunshot outside the classroom. He told ABC's "Good Morning America" that a few seconds later, the gunman entered and fired three to four more rounds. □



This combination of Aug. 4, 2022, images shows Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, left, and Hillsborough County State Attorney Andrew Warren during separate news conferences in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

By **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) —

The elected state prosecutor suspended by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is filing

Prosecutor ousted by DeSantis filing appeal to get job back

an appeal in his federal lawsuit against the governor in a renewed bid to get his job back.

Andrew Warren, a twice-elected Democratic state attorney in Hillsborough County, filed a notice of appeal in the case Tuesday, seeking to bring it to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in Atlanta.

DeSantis suspended Warren last year over the prosecutor's signing of statements that said he would not pursue criminal charges

against seekers or providers of abortion or gender transition treatments, as well as policies about not charging people with some minor crimes.

The notice of appeal comes a month after a federal judge in Tallahassee dismissed Warren's lawsuit against DeSantis.

In that ruling, U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle said federal law prevents him from returning Warren to office though a lawsuit that centered on state law, but that DeSantis violated the

First Amendment and the Florida Constitution by removing the prosecutor.

"The idea that the Governor can get away with breaking federal and state law should offend anyone who believes in freedom — free speech, free elections, and that no one is above the law," Warren said in a statement Tuesday.

"We've proven that DeSantis broke the law, and I'll keep fighting until I'm back doing the work that the people elected me to do." □

U.S. renews warning it'll defend Philippines after China spat

By **JIM GOMEZ**

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) —

The United States renewed a warning that it would defend its treaty ally if Filipino forces come under attack in the disputed South China Sea, after a Chinese coast guard ship allegedly hit a Philippine patrol vessel with military-grade laser that briefly blinded some of its crew.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. summoned Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian in Manila on Tuesday to express his serious concern "over the increasing frequency and intensity of actions by China against the Philippine coast guard and fishermen," Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said without elaborating.

The Department of Foreign Affairs separately sent a strongly worded diplomatic protest to the Chinese Embassy that "condemned the shadowing, harassment, dangerous maneuvers, directing of military-grade laser, and illegal radio challenges" by the



Aircraft from the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz and the USS Makin Island fly in formation past Nimitz in the South China Sea, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, as Nimitz and Makin Island with embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit were conducting operations.

Associated Press

Chinese ship.

The incident took place Feb. 6, when the Chinese coast guard ship beamed high-grade lasers to block the Philippine patrol vessel BRP Malapascua from approaching Second Thomas Shoal on a resupply mission

to Filipino forces there, according to Philippine officials.

China claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety, putting it on a collision course with other claimants.

Chinese naval forces have

been accused of using military-grade lasers previously against Australian military aircraft on patrol in the South China Sea and other spots in the Pacific.

Despite friendly overtures to Beijing by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte

and his successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who met Chinese leader Xi Jinping in January in Beijing, tensions have persisted, drawing in closer military alliance between the Philippines and the U.S.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Monday that a Philippine coast guard vessel trespassed into Chinese waters without permission. Chinese coast guard vessels responded "professionally and with restraint at the site in accordance with China's law and international law," he said, without elaborating or mentioning the use of laser.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said China's "dangerous operational behavior directly threatens regional peace and stability, infringes upon freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as guaranteed under international law and undermines the rules-based international order."

"The United States stands with our Philippine allies," Price said in a statement. □

Dutch appeals court prohibits border police ethnic profiling

By **MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — An appeals court on Tuesday prohibited the Netherlands' military police from using racial profiling as a way of selecting people for identity checks at borders, marking a victory for two citizens and rights groups who sued the government.

The Hague Court of Appeal overturned a 2021 ruling that said ethnicity could be one of the criteria for singling out passengers, but not the only one. The checks are carried out at airports and on trains and buses from European Union destinations to prevent people illegally coming and staying in the Netherlands.

The appeal court said in a statement that it found that the police, called the

Marechaussee, "makes a distinction on the basis of race.

Given the serious consequences of discrimination on grounds of race, such discrimination should only be made if there are particularly compelling reasons. The State has not demonstrated such compelling reasons."

The court said it "therefore prohibits the State from making selection decisions that are (partly) based on race" during border checks.

The case was brought by two citizens who argued that they were singled out for checks by officers from the country's Marechaussee police force because of the color of their skin.

One of the plaintiffs, Mpanzu Bamenga, a city councillor from Eindhoven

who was born in Congo, said after the original ruling in 2021, every time he returned to "my country, the Netherlands, I'm being stopped because of my ethnicity."

On Tuesday, he was jubilant at the court's ruling.

"This is discrimination, it's ethnic profiling," he said in a telephone interview. And it's so wonderful to see that the higher courts basically acknowledge it. And for me, as a human being, it's so good to see that justice has prevailed."

The Marechaussee said after the 2021 court case that it would change the way it works at border checks, but the appeals court said it saw "no or only limited change in working method."

Marechaussee spokesman Maj. Robert van Kapel said the organization would



Mpanzu Bamenga, center, stands with his legal team and rights activists outside a courtroom at The Hague District court, Netherlands, Sept. 22, 2021.

Associated Press

carefully study the ruling "and see what its consequences are for now."

The organization has the option to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Dionne Abdoelhafiezkhani of the Dutch rights group Controle Alt Delete said the court ruling "also makes it

clear that someone's appearance and color say nothing about someone's nationality.

That's an important correction to the court's earlier ruling that shocked many people of color and made us feel like second-class citizens." □

U.N. appeals for \$397 million to help Syrian quake survivors

By EDITH M. LEDERER and
RAF CASERT

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

The United Nations chief launched a \$397 million appeal Tuesday to help nearly 5 million survivors of last week's devastating earthquake in rebel-held northwest Syria who have received very little assistance because of deep divisions exacerbated by the country's 12-year war.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the appeal a day after he welcomed an agreement between the U.N. and Syrian President Bashar Assad to open two new crossing points from Turkey for an initial period of three months. The U.N. has only been allowed to deliver aid to the northwest Idlib area through a single crossing at Bab Al-Hawa, at Syrian ally Russia's insistence.

Guterres said the devastation from the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that ravaged southern Turkey and northwestern Syria on Feb. 6 "is one of the worst in recent memory," and "we all know that lifesaving aid has not been getting in at the speed and scale needed." He said the \$397 million will provide "desperately needed, life-saving relief for nearly 5 million Syrians



People who lost their houses in the devastating earthquake, lineup to receive aid supplies at a makeshift camp, in Iskenderun city, southern Turkey, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

including shelter, health care, food and protection" for three months.

Guterres said the U.N. is in the final stages of preparing an emergency appeal for quake-ravaged southern Turkey.

He urged the international community to provide the emergency funding without delay, saying: "The human suffering from this epic natural disaster should not be made even worse by manmade obstacles access, funding, supplies."

The secretary-general said aid to Syria must get through by all routes to all

areas without restrictions.

A senior U.N. World Food Program official warned that food insecurity in afflicted parts of Syria had been rising dramatically even before the earthquake struck.

"It was very bad before. Now it's dramatic," said Corinne Fleischer, the agency's Middle East Director. "Half of the population faces hunger. And that's the worst that we've seen since the beginning of the crisis in Syria. Even at the height of the war, we didn't have 12 million people food insecure," she said

in an interview with the Associated Press. Guterres announced that an 11-truck convoy was on the move to go through one of the newly opened crossings at Bab Al-Salam, "with many more to come." He said the second new crossing at Al Ra'ee is also open, "and goods are flowing."

The announcement of the two additional crossings from Turkey came as the U.N. Security Council was meeting Monday afternoon on the difficulties of getting aid to northwest Syria.

The U.N. has also been try-

ing to send a convoy to the northwest across conflict lines within Syria, but it hasn't gotten a green light from all parties. The convoy has reportedly been blocked by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a rebel group with ties to al-Qaida that controls part of the northwest. France's U.N. ambassador, Nicolas De Riviere, told reporters before Monday's council meeting that there were two options either the Syrian government grant additional access to the northwest or the council would try to adopt a resolution authorizing additional crossing points to the region. After the meeting and the announcement of the two new crossings, De Riviere said there should be no "obstacles" to delivering aid through the three crossings. If there are, he said, the Security Council should look into adopting a resolution under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which means it can be enforced militarily, to authorize the crossings and get aid to the millions in need.

Secretary-General Guterres, asked about a possible meeting with president Assad, said what's needed now is not high-level visits that divert resources but stepped-up relief efforts. □

Israeli Cabinet minister rejects U.S. criticism on settlements

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's finance minister on Tuesday dismissed Washington's criticism of new settlement

construction in the West Bank, promising to double down and legalize dozens of wildcat outposts in the

occupied territory. Bezalel Smotrich reaffirmed his commitment to expand Israeli authority in the lands that the Palestinians seek for a future state less than a day after the United States expressed opposition to the move.

On Tuesday, Europe's top diplomats also condemned Israel's plans to build thousands of new homes in the West Bank and retroactively legalize nine outposts, saying they are "deeply troubled" and "strongly oppose these unilateral actions."

The joint statement from the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom echoed

the American condemnation, with no sign they would any action against Israel.

Smotrich, a religious ultranationalist settler, appeared defiant on Tuesday. He and his right-wing allies, he said, remain "committed to removing completely the restrictions on building in Judea and Samaria," referring to the West Bank by its biblical names. Smotrich said the Israeli government has "clarified (its) position to the Americans."

"Disagreements are allowed, even between friends," he added.

In a contentious coalition deal, Prime Minister Benja-

min Netanyahu promised Smotrich authority over the defense body responsible for planning for both settlements and Palestinian construction in parts of the West Bank where Israel maintains civilian control. Once he receives those powers, Smotrich has vowed to "normalize" life for more than 500,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, erasing the differences between living in a settlement and within Israel's internationally recognized border and effectively annexing West Bank territory. Such a move would draw widespread global condemnation. □



A view of the West Bank Jewish settlement of Eli, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort presents plan to elevate Low Rise area

(ORANJESTAD) – On Monday, Minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber, met with the manager of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort and director of DOW,

Mr. Marlon Croes. In this meeting, Mr. Biemans from Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort presented a plan for elevating the entire Low Rise area.

The Beach Resort's proposal was to elevate the entire infrastructural area in the Low Rise hotel area. Currently, this area does not have enough capacity for the cars that park there. This is a risk for nearby walking tourists. The Bucuti & Tara franchise wants to construct a new parking lot, as well as a separate path for pedestrians and bicyclists that connects to the path planned for the Eagle Beach project. This plan is sure to elevate the product Aruba. This will provide more safety on the roadways for our visitors. In partnership with the Aruban government, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort and other nearby Time Share resorts hope to work together to elevate the entire area. □



January 2023 tourism statistics stronger than in 2022 and 2019

(Oranjestad)—In January 2023, Aruba received a total of 98,942 stay-over visitors. Compared with January 2019—which was the last year the island saw a normal influx of tourists before the pandemic—it is apparent that Aruba recovered 105% of what it received in January 2019. This indicates a 5% growth.

Comparing the 2023 figures with last year's, recovery rate reaches 166%, indicating a growth of 66%.

Accommodation

In January 2023, 82.8% of the total stay-over visitors come from the North American continent; 6.6% come from Europe; 8.4% from Latin America and 2.1% come from other parts of the world.

Considering the categories for accommodation, 36.1% of visitors stayed in High-Rise hotel; 8.1% stayed in Low-Rise hotels; 26.1% in Timeshares and 29.8% of visitors stayed in other types

of accommodation, also known as vacation rentals.

Vacation Rentals

It is important to mention that A.T.A. has access to a platform that provide an overview of the number of houses, apartments and villas that are used for vacation rental as well as the average price per night, the occupation and the

estimated revenue generated.

Comparing the 2023 figures with those from 2022, it seems that the average price of these accommodations increased with 15%; from an average of \$236 per night in January 2022 to \$271 per night in January 2023. Comparing the later with figures from 2019, the

average price increased with 43%; from an average of \$189 per night in 2019 to \$271 in 2023.

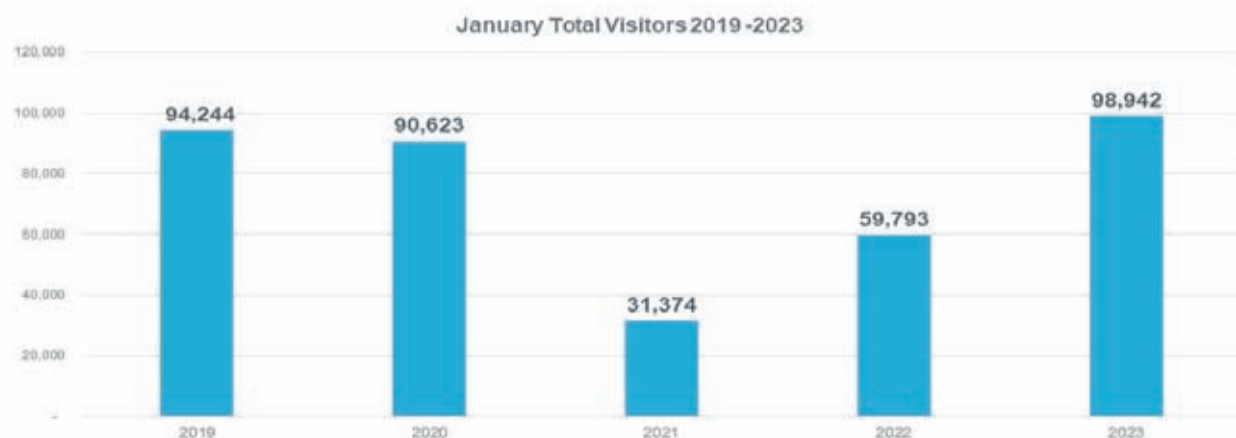
In terms of accommodation occupants, figures from 2022 increased with 7%; from an average of 61% of occupants in 2022 to 68% in 2023. Comparing current figures with those from 2019, the average

percentage increased with 3 points; from an average of 65% in 2019 to 68% in 2023.

In terms of revenue, the figures from January 2022 increased with 42%. Comparing figures from 2023 with figures from 2019, the average percentage increased with 195% since the latter year. □



STAY-OVER VISITOR ARRIVALS JANUARY 2019 - 2023



LOCAL



PALM BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Olga Ruiz had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are George & Ann Dombroski residents of Connecticut, United States who have been honored as the first ever Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino

a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

Our first Emerald Ambassadors love coming to the island for the friendliness of the people that makes the visitors feel safe, the cleanliness of the island, the variety of restaurants and food, the beautiful beaches and the consistency of beautiful weather.



Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and Mrs. Verna Dijkhof representing the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino bestowed the certification of the first ever Emerald Ambassadors at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino. The honorees were presented with memorable gifts, what made the gifting section so special was that Mr. Dombroski is a coin collector, and one of the symbolic gifts that an Emerald ambassador acquires is the commemorative Emerald Coin that represents 35 years of continued visits.

On behalf of the Government of Aruba we want to thank you for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. Aruba is definitely their home away from home! □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles

are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".



The honorees are David and Diane Rittenhouse from Pennsylvania who have been honored as Distinguished visitors.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The couple loves coming to the island for its lovely weather, friendly people and safety on the island.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of Manchebo beach resort bestowed the Distinguished visitors certification to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and their home-away-from-home. □

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Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any

piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined

these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up



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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Body painted

EpisodeCXCIII- 193

Destination values, native heritage, and cultural identity are what we advocate for in our own particular way of safeguarding all reasons to love Aruba. Etnia Nativa, through this cultural blog, "Island-Insight," shares native cultural awareness, educates, and safeguards native heritage. It is how we encourage you to experiment with an island-keeper state of mind during your stay.

In this episode, we present the art of tattooing and learn where we believe it all began. Our forefathers also practiced this art in Aruba many years ago; instead of needles, men tattooed their skin with cactus thorns and black pigment obtained by crushing charcoal into a fine powder and mixing it with water. Carbon gave a deep blue color under the skin.

Indigenous people from different parts of the world were the precursors of body modification, either through piercings or through tattoos, so tribal tattoos are the very origin of the tattoo world. However, little is known about when or why this practice began. The oldest known skin drawings are the geometric motifs of the Ötzi mummy, who lived more than 5,000 years ago. At the end of the nineteenth century, tattoos were considered taboo and a vulgar or barbaric practice, but the truth is that tattoos have had a significant influence and meaning among world tribes as well as those of Native American ancestry. So if you are searching for inspiration for your next tattoo, the art of Etnia Nativa can offer you motives in every striking design.

In North America, indigenous women often used their tattoos as a form of seduction, while men used them as a symbol of conquest, strength, or power in wars or battles. One of the great motivations that led the indigenous people to tattoo their bodies was to record the enemies they had killed by drawing symbols that



indicated the amount, and it was a type of tattoo that they used to wear on their thighs. Some tribes only allowed their members to get tattoos after they had killed their first enemy.

In general, men used to have tattooed symbols of war such as axes, arrows, or sticks. But only the best warriors had the privilege of wearing the best tattoos, which were symbols of pride and recognition for the public. This included back and chest tattoos, most notably a drawing of a sacred item or deity like a stone knife or the tribe's ceremonial pipes, etc.

For the Mayans, it was also customary to use tattoos as a symbol of war. Their designs were based on drawings of animals such as monkeys, jaguars, snakes, and eagles. The number of tattoos that were possessed indicated the hierarchy and status of the particular warrior. So a good warrior should have practically his entire body covered.

The Inca tattoos consisted of some geometric and some abstract descriptions of the daily utensils they used. The ceramic design found on multiple vessels discovered in different regions of Peru depicts motifs that were later discovered as tattoos on mummies. Zigzag elements or animal engravings were the most common.

But how did the native people get their tattoos? Archaeologists from Washing-

ton State University have discovered a 2,000-year-old tool known as the "Pueblo Needle" in southeastern present-day Utah, belonging to the Anasazi culture. The pen-sized tool has a handle about nine centimeters (3.5 inches) long made of sumac wood, tied at the end with shrub leaves (*Rhus trilobata*) and some cactus spines with carbon spots on their tips, a detail that caught the attention of archaeologists.

Intrigued by Aruba's origins and its cultural heritage? Then we encourage you to do something outside of the tourist grid and become the exclusive visitors of Etnia Nativa, a private encounter set up where you will be able to touch and be touched by authentic Aruba heritage, a spectacle of native art, archaic as well as archaeological artifacts, lithic tools, colonial furniture, and other items of the island's bygone era. Get inside a recycled environment full of peace, relaxation, and knowledgeable Native stories.

Etnia Nativa has been, since 1994, the home of science and an acclaimed columnist, artist, and craftsman who guides and lectures you through his resplendent collection. The landmark Etnia Nativa provides an authentic glimpse into Aruba's native cultural heritage. Something completely unique, a modern Native Aruba experience!

Appointment is required + 297 592 2702 or etnianativa03@gmail.com. □



History of Carnival in Aruba



(VisitAruba.com) – Each year in January and February, Aruba celebrates another edition of its popular and impressive Carnival season. The incredible atmosphere and cultural diversity during carnival is definitely something that you need to experience. Carnival has its origins in the 1920s, and it evolved through different cultural influences to arrive to what we know and love today.

1921-1945

The first signs of Carnival celebrations began in 1921, when some of the many social clubs would have parties with costumes. These parties would take place at the venues of the social clubs and were primarily elite balls with European style, like debutant balls and costume parties to celebrate the festivities of the season. After some years, the Americans in San Nicolas who were working at the Lago Refinery introduced their own celebrations for the season, with Ameri-

can style. These seasonal festivities were mainly centered around Halloween, Christmas and Carnival, and became the first step on the road to the carnival celebrations that we know today.

1945-1954

During these years, the Lago Refinery began reaching its employment peak, with most of the recruiting done in the English-speaking islands in the Caribbean, namely Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guyana. These English-speaking migrants were the first to organize a parade in San Nicolas for the allied victory in World War II. It was these immigrants who enriched Aruba's Trinidadian-style Carnival.

Meanwhile, the carnival celebrations of Carnival at the social clubs were becoming bigger and bigger. Every club had a Carnival Queen election on the island, and the first parades were organized by Aruba's oldest social club, Tivoli.

1954-1965

The third era of Aruba's carnival began when the native Aruban and English groups joined to plan the first public carnival for the entire island, under a (temporary) Central Carnival Committee. With Club Tivoli as a host, the representatives of various social clubs held a meeting to coordinate their efforts for a single, unique Carnival parade in Oranjestad, combining steelband, floats and musicians in costumes and masks. The Carnival Committee organized the first Carnival Queen election.

In 1957, the tradition of having two big parades began; the first in San Nicolas and the second in the capital of Oranjestad. After eight years, Calypso and Roadmarch became an integral part of the Carnival season with the introduction of Calypso contests.

1966-present

The first year of this era was known for the establishment of SAC – The Aruban Carnival Foundation. This committee was founded at exactly 11:11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, known as Fools Day. The Committee was the main



organizer of the Carnival festivities, however, it was not the only one: In 1981, Tivoli Social Club established the Lighting Parade.

Nowadays, Aruba's Carnival has grown to become one of the biggest in the Caribbean, with an entire month of parades and activities.

For more information, visit <https://www.visitaruba.com/things-to-do/carnival/arubas-carnival-history/>. To see more photographs of the history of Aruba's carnival, visit the archives of the National Library of Aruba <https://archive.org/search?query=carnaval+aruba>

Carnival 2023 schedule

THURSDAY FEB 16
LIGHTING PARADE SAN NICOLAS
SAN NICOLAS 8PM-2AM

SATURDAY FEB 18
SAN NICOLAS GRAND CARNIVAL PARADE
SAN NICOLAS 12PM-6PM

SUNDAY FEB 19
ARUBA'S 69TH GRAND CARNIVAL PARADE
ORANJESTAD 11AM-6PM

SUNDAY FEB 19
BURNING OF MOMO – CARNIVAL 69
CARNIVAL HARBOUR ARENA
7PM-9PM

MONDAY FEB 20
CARNIVAL MONDAY

TUESDAY FEB 21
OLD MASK PARADE
SAN NICOLAS 8PM-12AM

WEDNESDAY FEB 22
ASH WEDNESDAY



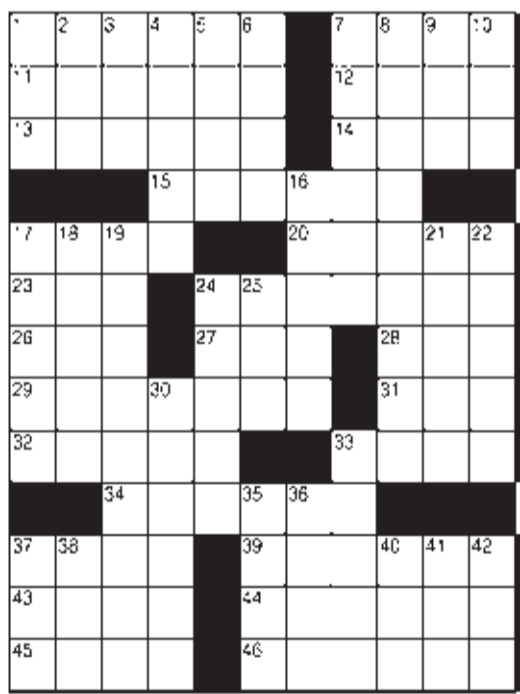
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 44 Mars or 1 Entices Mercury
 - 7 "Waterloo" group
 - 11 Stressed type
 - 12 Placed down
 - 13 Venus's sister
 - 14 Does something
 - 15 En-dangered
 - 17 Component
 - 20 Revue segments
 - 23 Thurman of film
 - 24 "Brand New Key" singer
 - 26 Snapshot
 - 27 Wisdom bringer
 - 28 Gadot of "Wonder Woman"
 - 29 Rorschach creation
 - 31 Web address
 - 32 River through Nantes
 - 33 Relaxing resorts
 - 34 Get snug
 - 37 Border
 - 39 Book checks
 - 43 Praise
- DOWN**
- 1 "My country — of thee"
 - 2 Summer in Paris
 - 3 Spoil
 - 4 Cloth fold
 - 5 Color
 - 6 Wound reminder
 - 7 Denali setting
 - 8 Computer safeguard
 - 9 Particle
 - 10 TV spots
 - 16 Key
 - 17 Eye opening
 - 18 — acids
 - 19 Amassing
 - 21 Pageant topper
 - 22 Hawks
 - 24 Bulls and bucks
 - 25 Swelled head
 - 30 Kennel club
 - 33 Car type
 - 35 Lights-out music
 - 36 Doozy
 - 37 Quarter-back
 - 38 Block up
 - 40 Neither Dem. nor Rep.
 - 41 Earl Grey, e.g.
 - 42 Pig place



Yesterday's answer



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Review: A Marvel villain comes into focus in 'Ant-Man 3'

By **LINDSEY BAHR**

AP Film Writer

Peyton Reed's "Ant-Man" films have generally served as a kind of palate cleanser to the world-ending stakes of the larger Marvel Cinematic Universe. Paul Rudd's Scott Lang is just an ordinary dude, or so they keep telling us, who still can't really believe that he's part of the Avengers at all. He gets to be the wide-eyed middle-aged fanboy of the group in those films. In his own films, he's just living a blue-sky life in San Francisco as an affable single dad and ex-con who was once fired from Baskin Robbins and who has occasional enemies to defeat. In this third film, "Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania," in theaters Thursday, he's coasting on his own post-Blip celebrity with a best-selling memoir out, lots of fans around town and a generally sunny disposition when he's not breaking his teenage daughter Cassie (now played by Kathryn Newton, always an enjoyable presence) out of jail for civil disobedience. There is a fun, light, sitcom-y touch to these early scenes in which he and his make-



This image released by Disney shows Paul Rudd, from left, Kathryn Newton and Evangeline Lilly in a scene from "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania."

Associated Press

shift family, Hope Van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly), Janet Van Dyne (Michelle Pfeiffer) and Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) sit around the table for takeout pizza. They use their particle technology to blow up the tiny pie. "I just saved us \$8," Pym declares proudly. But Ant-Man is part of the larger chess board of the MCU, so naturally he's doomed to be sucked into the multiverse mess, setting up pieces for more Avengers films to come with the introduction of a new villain, Kang (played with a

maniacal sorrow by the great Jonathan Majors). And the results are mixed. Reed has returned to direct with a new writer, Jeff Loveness, who has also been tapped to write "Avengers: The Kang Dynasty" and it's hard not to empathize with both for the logic gymnastics required to back Ant-Man and his gang into this conflict. Loveness, who cut his teeth in comedy and has an affinity for comic book and B-movie absurdities, gives Ant-Man his own "Star Wars"-adjacent adventure. There's quite a bit

of unrest in the Quantum Realm, with scrappy rebels battling against a powerful ruler with an army of faceless soldiers. But he takes that conceit further and gives the rebels some personality and humor, including William Jackson Harper as the mind-reading Quaz. The villain's a killing machine, M.O.D.O.K., that looks (knowingly) straight out of a "Mystery Science Theater 3000" movie and it is quite entertaining. It's both a nod to the fun of the ridiculousness in sci-fi and a reminder that Serious Superhero Films

are sometimes just one crazy special effect away from being Silly Superhero Films. "Quantumania" also gives Pfeiffer a lot more to do as we, and Hank and Hope, learn a little bit more about Janet's 30 years in the Quantum Realm and the various compromises and allegiances she made to stay alive. Pfeiffer is an unambiguous delight and the real center of the movie despite what the title might claim. Ant-Man just finds himself in the middle of the mess, which starts to drag on in a muddle of sci-fi furnishings that individually are probably quite inspired and interesting but together just blend into a dreary mess. But Kang, for what we can assume are bigger story needs, needs to be more serious. Majors is certainly chilling and captivating, but Kang seems like a mismatched foe for a standalone Ant-Man film and the result is a "Quantumania" that is trying to be too many things. One thing it is not is a Wasp movie, though. Lilly gets a lot to do but not a lot of — or any — character development. □

Idris Elba on James Bond: 'I'm not going to be that guy'

By **JON GAMBRELL**

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Actor Idris Elba says he's going to stick with being the tormented detective John Luther not

James Bond. Speaking Tuesday to the World Government Summit in Dubai, Elba brought up the persistent discussions about him taking over as Ian Fleming's famed Brit-

ish spy. Those had grown louder after Daniel Craig's demise as Bond in the 25th film in the franchise called "No Time to Die." Asked about his upcoming film based on the British series "Luther," Elba clearly took himself out of playing 007. "It's very dark," Elba said of the series. "We've been working on the television show for about 10 years and so the natural ambition is to take it to the big screen, and so we're here with the first movie." He added: "You know, a lot of people talk about another character that begins with 'J' and ends with 'B,' but I'm not going to be that guy. I'm going to be John Luther. That's who I am." "Luther: The Fallen Sun" is

due to come out in American theaters on Feb. 24, then stream on Netflix beginning March 10. It also co-stars Andy Serkis and other actors from the television series. Elba, 50, is known for a variety of television and film roles, ranging from Stringer Bell on the American television series "The Wire" and the recent movie "Beast." While on stage, Elba discussed an upcoming film he's working on with the American actor and wrestler John Cena called "The Heads of State." "He plays the American president. I play the British prime minister," Elba said. "We get into a caper. I'm very excited about doing that because leadership comes in many different forms."

In recent weeks, Elba has appeared at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he and his wife Sabrina Dhowre Elba received an award for their work on food security in Africa. Elba also has worked as an anti-crime ambassador with his "Don't Stab Your Future" initiative in the United Kingdom, where he grew up in east London. During his talk, Elba urged nations to invest more in creative industries, saying it can provide an economic engine that provides jobs to their youth. In particular, he said creative jobs could greatly help countries in Africa. "I believe that Africa, especially as a continent, needs to hold a narrative, change a narrative," he said. □



British actor Idris Elba arrives on stage during the World Government Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

Bringing together the best should include the rest

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tiger Woods is back among the modern stars in the game, this time with his golf clubs, still wearing more than one hat.

He is a player at the Genesis Invitational. It already has the strongest field of the year, but Woods brings a buzz that only he can generate. Never mind that he has never won at Riviera even when Woods was at the zenith of his game.

When he plays, everyone watches.

Woods also is the tournament host who hands out the trophy. For so many players who grew up idolizing him which is practically all of them it can make winning feel even greater than the \$3.6 million payoff. "Tiger Woods is handing us a trophy that's a pretty crazy thought," Max Homa said when he won two years ago.

Equally important is the voice Woods brings to the private meetings, like the one scheduled for Tuesday afternoon at Riviera, as the leading players try to map out the best way forward for the PGA Tour amid the Saudi-funded threat of LIV Golf.

Woods last showed up



Bob May, of Las Vegas, Nev., left, along with with Tiger Woods, watches a tee shot fall on the seventh fairway during the National Car Rental Golf Classic at Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., on Oct. 26, 2000.

at an "actual PGA Tour event" his words when he announced on Twitter he was playing at Riviera last August in Delaware. He flew up to lead the first such meeting when the main objective was to bring golf's best together more often. The next step is deciding how elite these tournaments should be, not just prize money but how many players get to compete.

If he speaks from experi-

ence and no one can like Woods he would do well to mention a few names that illustrate what makes golf the ultimate meritocracy.

Bob May.

He was the journeyman from California who challenged Woods like no one else could in the summer of 2000. May was leading the PGA Championship by one shot with two to play until Woods birdied the last two holes and beat him in a

three-hole playoff. Woods said then it was "probably one of the greatest duels I've ever had in my life."

Grant Waite.

The Kiwi with one PGA Tour victory and a world ranking of No. 242 matched Woods shot for shot on the back nine in the 2000 Canadian Open. Waite trailed by one when he hit 5-iron to 40 feet for an eagle attempt on Glen Abbey's par-5 closing hole. That forced Woods

to play boldly, and he did. In one of the more famous shots of a career filled with them, Woods hit 6-iron from 218 yards out of a fairway bunker, over the water and right at the flag to set up a two-putt birdie and another win.

Rocco Mediate.

He had to go through 36-hole qualifying just to get to Torrey Pines for the 2008 U.S. Open. A five-time winner, Mediate was 45 and ranked No. 157 in the world. And then he pushed Woods to the limits, rallying from two behind in the final round to force a playoff. Mediate dressed in black pants and a red shirt no one else is that audacious and Woods had to go 19 holes to beat him.

There were plenty of other occasions where Woods battled the best Ernie Els at Kapalua and Disney (yes, Disney), Phil Mickelson at Doral and Bay Hill, Vijay Singh at The Players Championship, David Duval at the Masters.

Those were the best.

But it was the rest who provided theater just as great, all because they had a tee time. That's all anyone needs. And even as the PGA Tour works toward an elite league, it would do well to remember that. □

Associated Press

Former Cardinals lineman Conrad Dobler dies at 72

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Conrad Dobler, one of the NFL's top offensive linemen and fiercest players in the 1970s, has died. He was 72.

The Arizona Cardinals announced Dobler died Monday in Pueblo, Colorado. No cause of death was given.

Dobler played left guard on an offensive line that included Hall of Famer Dan Dierdorf for a St. Louis team that became known as the "Cardiac Cardinals."

Dobler also was known for his dirty play and even titled his autobiography "They

Call Me Dirty" after 10 years of eye gouging, leg whipping and finger biting in the trenches of the 1970s NFL. Dobler also embraced his troublemaking persona in a 1987 Miller Lite commercial by riling up by getting them to argue the beer's "Tastes great/Less filling" tag line.

"Our hearts go out to the family, friends and former teammates of Conrad Dobler," Cardinals owner Michael Bidwill said in a statement. "He was the kind of tough, physical and fierce player that you love to line up with as a team-

mate and hate to line up against as an opponent. On the field, Conrad was a big reason for the success of the Cardiac Cards of the 1970s. Away from it, he brought authentic joy and caring to everyone who had the privilege of being his friend and that is what I will remember most."

Dobler earned three consecutive Pro Bowl appearances from 1975-77 while playing under Hall of Fame coach Don Coryell. The 1975 offensive set what was then an NFL record by allowing eight sacks. He



St. Louis Cardinals' Conrad Dobler (66) leads the march off the field at the end of practice at the Cardinals' training camp at St. Charles, Mo., Aug. 5, 1977.

Associated Press

played for the Cardinals from 1972-77 before moving on to play two seasons each with New Orleans and Buffalo.

Dobler was a fifth-round pick out of Wyoming in the 1972 NFL draft. He is survived by six children and 12 grandchildren. □

NFL skids into offseason after slippery Super Bowl

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

Gratitude and brotherhood were on display at the Super Bowl, where Travis and Jason Kelce tussled for the Lombardi Trophy in a classic back-and-forth clash and Damar Hamlin received a rousing ovation during a pregame ceremony honoring the men and women who saved his life. The feel-good vibes didn't last as long as the NFL would have liked, however. After the NBA encroached on the NFL's biggest week by moving its trade deadline from late March to smack dab in the middle of Super Bowl week, the Kansas City Chiefs rallied past the Philadelphia Eagles 38-35 after the game took on the flavors of both MLB and the NHL.

The NFL's biggest stage looked too much like a hockey rink when State Farm Stadium lived up to its reputation of slippery fields with players from both teams having a hard time keeping their footing.

The waxy grass neutralized the vaunted pass rush for both teams, helping Patrick Mahomes and Jalen Hurts rack up points like pinball wizards at a vintage arcade.

Yet, just days after NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell declared the league's officiating better than ever, a debatable holding call just after the two-minute warning ensured there would be



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes holds the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the NFL Super Bowl 57 football game against the Philadelphia Eagles, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, in Glendale, Ariz.

no chance for a fantastic finish to an otherwise scintillating Super Bowl 57.

The flag just the ninth penalty of the game was akin to an umpire suddenly expanding his strike zone in the ninth inning, and it drew condemnation far and wide.

The Chiefs faced third-and-8 at the Eagles 15-yard line with 1:54 remaining when Mahomes threw incomplete to JuJu Smith-Schuster. But officials flagged James Bradberry for defensive holding, which negated the incompleteness and, more importantly, gave the Chiefs a first down.

Replays showed that Bradberry made light contact with Smith-Schuster, though it didn't appear to affect the play that much.

Referee Carl Cheffers said it was a "clear case of a jersey grab" and added that nobody on his crew disagreed with the penalty. There was plenty of bickering from fans and commentators.

Former NFL tight end Greg Olsen wasn't happy with the decision on the Fox broadcast and ESPN and Amazon analyst Kirk Herbstreit also was critical on social media, as were several current and former NFL players.

ESPN commentator and former NFL QB Tim Hasselbeck said it's too much to ask officials to suddenly swallow their whistles in crucial moments because fans want to see a more climactic ending to the Super Bowl.

"That to me, in a regular-season game on third-and-7, that's a flag. I don't want the officials calling it any differently because it's a tie game in the Super Bowl," Hasselbeck said. "The job is hard enough. Let's not have them all of a sudden call it differently based on, 'Hey it's a tie game, everyone at home would like a close one.'"

Associated Press

Kansas City was able to essentially run out the clock after the flag, giving coach Andy Reid his second Super Bowl title, this one against the team that once fired him after he couldn't win the big one in Philadelphia. After Harrison Butker kicked a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds remaining, the Eagles got the ball back with only the chance for a desperation heave from Hurts that didn't get anywhere near the end zone.

Despite all the consternation surrounding what many considered a ticky-tack flag, Bradberry acknowledged he committed a penalty on the pivotal play. "It was a holding," Bradberry said. "I tugged his jersey. I was hoping they would let it slide."

Sliding was the theme of the afternoon, after all.

The Eagles' pass rushers didn't record a single sack in the Super Bowl after piling up an incredible 78 sacks on the season, including 10 in the playoffs. Hurts and Eagles tight end Dallas Goedert were among the players who changed their cleats at halftime to get better traction.

"It's not like we were playing on the on ice and they were playing on grass," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said. "We all had to play on it, we all have to figure out our shoes."

Indeed, the Chiefs were just as bothered by the slippery field. □

Angels infielder Luis Rengifo goes to arbitration with L.A.



Los Angeles Angels' Luis Rengifo runs past first after hitting a solo home run against the Texas Rangers during the third inning of a baseball game in Anaheim, Calif., Sept. 30, 2022.

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Luis Rengifo went to salary arbitration with the Los Angeles Angels on Monday, requesting a raise from \$730,000 to \$2.3 million while the team argued for \$2 million.

The infielder's case was heard by Jeanne Vonhof, Howard Edelman and Fredric Horowitz, and a decision is expected this week.

Rengifo set career bests last season with a .264 batting average, 17 homers and 52 RBIs. He walked 17

times in 511 plate appearances, at 3.3% the lowest percentage among qualified hitters.

Four other players have pending decisions: Angels outfielder Hunter Renfroe (\$11.9 million vs. \$11.25 million), Tampa Bay relievers Ryan Thompson (\$1.2 million vs. \$1 million) and Colin Poche (\$1.3 million vs. \$1,175,000), and Rays outfielder Harold Ramirez (\$2.2 million vs. \$1.9 million). Players and teams have split six decisions.

All-Star pitcher Max Fried (\$13.5 million) lost to Atlanta, outfielder Kyle Tucker was beaten by Houston and reliever Diego Castillo (\$2.95 million) was defeated by Seattle.

Left-handed pitcher Jesús Luzardo (\$2.45 million) and AL batting champion Luis Arraez (\$6.1 million) both beat Miami, and reliever Jason Adam (\$1,775,000) defeated Tampa Bay.

Nine players remain scheduled for hearings, which run through Friday. □